

Level III. written

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Dear Frank Herbert, the deceased author of Dune

Your book is a story about a planet that is a source of wealth. The native worms, are gigantic in size and produce Spice; a narcotic that allows prediction of the future. Also, the human natives, although they only immigrated to Dune first, were living a nomadic life in the desert troubled by the lack of water.

The main idea that I picked out of this book is that there are no absolutes. It is dangerous to know anything for certain. Paul, the main character delved into the future several times using the spice melange. He saw a certain future of a jihad, led by him over the entire known universe. By seeing this future he had fated the future to a single thread of time. All of humankind was then taken up in his war and many died. To know a certainty makes it certain. Most of us are certain of gravity, and therefore it is mostly a certainty.

This is also a story about the child who escaped the system by one, being born one generation too early, living in a location in which he gained command of a large army that had no equal anywhere in the universe. His mother was commanded by the Bene Gesserit to have a female child, and instead Paul was born. This is a sad story of one who escaped fate, yet then turned around and fated many to doom.

It is interesting to note that the political system is feudal. The great houses own planets and the spice trade. The houses also had a pact against nuclear violence. The only thing keeping the houses from destroying the others was that if one house tried to eliminate the competition, the surviving competition would eliminate them. Religions were tailor made for each planet by the Bene Gesserit. When Paul Aterides gained power this changed. He was the messiah, the prophet, the leader, and the god. He made a system of government and religion. In order to be faithful, you served the prophet. In order to be lawful, you served the prophet.

This cycle for the power for the government of Dune shows me that church and state must be separated. Combining them even in the smallest way increases the acceptance of authority. Authority is the opposite of liberty, because authority causes a society to develop a class system, and liberty is when all in a society are equals. Perpetual war is the same thing as perpetual peace. In later books, the son of Paul proves this. He created a three thousand, five hundred year peace in order to make humankind realize its desire for conflict. After his death, armies were reduced, and people tried to settle things without violence, although violence was still quite common.

I think how this book affected my thinking most was in the way that I began to realize that politics are sometimes more about economics than liberties. It has allowed me to spot the War on Terrorism as a false god to unite the national government and strengthen authority of it. A nation with a government by the people, for the people, and with the people should not need to pass acts that circumvent the rights and equality of man in order to declare itself more secure. Much to the opposite a government must release authority and replace it with liberty and equity to declare itself more secure place for its citizens to live.